Export of onion

1758. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a decision for free export of onion;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the estimated Minimum Export Price (MEP) of onion; and

(d) the estimated revenue from onion export during the next two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) No Sir, Government has not taken any decision for free export of onions. Onions are presently exportable through the following 13 designated State Trading Enterprises notified by the Government without any quantitative ceilings:—

(i) National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED).

(ii) Maharashtra State Agricultural Marketing Board (MSAMB).

(iii) Gujarat Agro Industries Corporation Ltd. (GALC)

(iv) The Spices Trading Corporation Ltd. (STCL)

(v) The A.P. State Trading Corporation.

(vi) The Karnataka State Co-operative Marketing Federation Ltd. (KSCMF)

(vii) The National Co-operative Consumers Federation of India Ltd. (NCCF)

(viii) The North Karnataka Onion Growers Co-operative Society (NKOGCS)

(ix) West Bengal Essential Commodities Supply Corporation (WBECSC) Ltd., Kolkata

(x) M.P. State Agro Industries Development Corporation (MPSAIDC), Bhopal

(xi) Karnataka State Produce Processing and Export Corporation (KAPPEC), Bangalore

(xii) Madhya Pradesh State Co-operative Oil Seeds Growers Federation Ltd.,

(xiii) The Andhra Pradesh Marketing Federation (AP MARKFED)

(c) and (d) Government of India keeps a watch on prices and availability of onions to the domestic consumers through an Inter Ministerial Review Committee and Minimum Export Price (MEP) of onion is fixed on a monthly basis. Exports being dependent on a host of factors, including external factors, the Minimum Export Price as well as the revenue expected during the next two year as such cannot be estimated.

Turmeric patents

1759. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that one hundred twenty-one turmeric related patents have been granted in the USA so far;

(b) if so, whether Government have filed any objections in this regard; and

(c) if not, how Government propose to protect Indian medicinal plants and Indian bio-heritage from being exploited by the foreign firms?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (c) Patents are sought and obtained by applicants/inventors, both Indian and foreign, in different countries to safeguard and promote their commercial and other interests. Such patents are granted under the sovereign prerogative of countries according to their respective patent laws and have territorial effect, that is they are effective only in the country of grant. In order to qualify for grant of patent in any country an invention, whether process or product, has to meet the criteria of patentability, namely, novelty inventiveness and industrial applicability.

As patents are essentially private rights they are normally challenged, in accordance with the patent laws of the country concerned, by the person(s) whose interests are affected/jeopardized. As and when information is received about patents being obtained on certain items which are not considered patentable and which affect Indian interests, steps are taken to assess whether the grant of such patent can be challenged under the